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INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
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RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000715

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA AND WHA/CAR
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2018
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [CU](#) [BB](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF
THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: REF: STATE 126578

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires D. Brent Hardt for reasons 1.4(b) and
(d).

Summary

[¶1.](#) (C) At the 2008 CARICOM-Cuba Summit, Antigua and Barbuda publicly declared its commitment to deepening its relationship with Cuba further through increased bilateral collaboration and exchange in a number of areas such as renewable energy, sports, health, education, agriculture, engineering, disaster mitigation, tourism, and science and technology. Antigua and Barbuda also called for an end to U.S. trade embargo, agreeing with the CARICOM consensus that the embargo is synonymous with international interference and a violation of sovereignty. End Summary.

Nature of Investments

[¶2.](#) (C) There are no known private sector investments in Cuba from Antiguan nationals. Post has no evidence of participation by businesses from Antigua and Barbuda in FIHAV 2008.

Bilateral Trade Agreements

[¶3.](#) (U) Antigua and Barbuda's trade agreements with Cuba are mostly through CARICOM, of which Antigua and Barbuda is a member. In December 2005, CARICOM's "Declaration of Bridgetown" gave Cuba access to free trade in the region. While more a declaration than a detailed trade agreement, the agreement aimed to strengthen cooperation and build links in the areas of trade, education, health, culture and sports. The CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement was signed in July 2000, and provides for duty-free access on certain goods and services in each territory. The agreement also provides for the adoption of common positions at international fora and the exchange of information and views on economic and social matters of mutual interest.

Exchange Programs

[¶4.](#) (U) The Government of Cuba's (GOC) "Operacion Milagro"

is one of Cuba's most publicized programs in the Eastern Caribbean, especially in Antigua and Barbuda, where 1,182 people suffering from vision impairment have benefited from receiving an all-expense paid trip to Cuba for free cataract removal, cornea transplants, and/or glaucoma treatment, while over 13,000 people have been screened in Antigua under the program. Currently, the GOC is sending Cuban doctors to Antigua to perform these surgeries in-country. There are currently 44 Cuban personnel working in Antigua and Barbuda in health care. In Cuba, the GOC established a special medical facility, where there are currently 43 students from Antigua and Barbuda being trained in the areas of mental health, clinical nursing, oncology care, dialysis care, health administration, and clinical pharmacology. Cuba also assisted in the development, equipping and staffing of a diagnostic center in Antigua with an intensive care unit, rehabilitation center, and ambulance. In addition, the GOC provided a power generation unit for an Antiguan hospital upgrade, along with operation rooms and equipment. Cuba has a program to replace millions of incandescent light bulbs with Cuban-made fluorescent bulbs aimed at saving energy throughout the Caribbean.

Democracy and Human Rights Promotion

¶5. (C) Antigua and Barbuda has done nothing to advance democracy and human rights in Cuba, but has instead shown solidarity with Cuba in international fora, particularly on matters related to the U.S. embargo. Antigua and Barbuda regularly votes to support pro-Cuba resolutions in the

United Nations and almost never criticizes the Castro regime on its human rights record.

High-Level Visits

¶6. (U) Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer was in Havana on December 8, 2008 attending the CARICOM-Cuba Summit. While at the meeting PM Spencer called on the United States to remove its trade embargo on Cuba. In May of 2008, PM Spencer visited Cuba for a meeting with new Cuban President Raul Castro. While there, he expressed his keen interest in Cuba's experience in dealing with diabetes and other chronic ailments. In a public statement, PM Spencer declared that "the Government and people of Antigua and Barbuda thank the Government and people of the Republic of Cuba for their significant humanitarian gesture." Spencer also expressed his hope "for the full recovery of Cuban President Fidel Castro" and that he is "looking forward to an excellent working relationship."

Comment

¶7. (C) Antigua and Barbuda and Cuba have had solid diplomatic relations for over thirty years and like other Eastern Caribbean states, consider each other "Caribbean brothers." In addition, Antigua and Barbuda's recent U.N. voting record on human rights and democracy indicates that Antigua and Barbuda does not support democracy and human rights in Cuba. HARDT
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